

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5744

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NO, UR
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON SOVIET RELATIONS

REFS: (A) OSLO 5592 (B) OSLO 5715

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND CONFIRMED TO ME GON
ASSESSMENTS OF THE KOSYGIN MEETING IN HELSINKI AND SAID THAT HE
REGARDED KOSYGIN'S STATEMENTS AS PLANNED, AND RELATED TO
THE SUBSEQUENTLY POSTPONED VISIT OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
ZIMSKOV. WE READ THESE ACTIONS AS A SOVIET EFFORT TO INDUCE
NORWAY TO TAKE A LESS FORCEFUL NATO STANCE AND TO BE MORE
ACCOMMODATING TO SOVIET INTERESTS IN THIS REGION. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING MY DECEMBER 22 VISIT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND
I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE GENERAL STATE OF SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS.
I MENTIONED IN PARTICULAR THE MEETING WITH KOSYGIN IN HELSINKI,
THE RECENTLY POSTPONED ZIMSKOV VISIT AND THE DELAY IN THE VISIT
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TO OSLO OF FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV. I ASKED HIM IF HE SAW
ANY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THREE EVENTS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER
STATED THAT THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST AND THE SCHEDULED ZIMSKOV
VISIT WERE DISTINCTLY RELATED. HE BELIEVED THAT THE DELAY IN
THE ISHKOV VISIT (OSLO 5715) WAS NOT PART OF THE SAME NEXUS.
HE NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS MAY NEED MORE TIME TO STUDY THE PROPOSED
SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE.

3. IN REGARD TO THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST IN HELSINKI, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE EVENT HAD BEEN DRAMATIZED. HE DID, HOWEVER, CONFIRM EARLIER GON REPORTS THAT THE OUTBURST, OR AT LEAST THE CONTENT OF DEPUTY PREMIER'S REMARKS, HAD BEEN DELIBERATE AND WAS SEEN BY THE GON AS AN OVERTURE TO THE VISIT OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZIMSKOV, THEN SCHEDULED FOR 20-23 DECEMBER.

4. FRYDENLUND SAID THAT DURING THE KOSYGIN MEETING, CRITICISM OF NORWAY DOMINATED THE TALKS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER FELT THAT THE SOVIETS WERE CONCERNED LARGELY ABOUT THREE ITEMS; THE PRESTOCKAGE OF MILIARY MATERIEL IN NORWAY, THE INVOLVEMENT OF GERMAN FORCES IN MANEUVERS IN NORWAY AND LASTELY, WITH THE INCREASED LEVEL OF NORWEGIAN CONCERN AND ACTIVITY CONCERNING THE NORTHERN AREAS.

5. THE MINISTER SAID THAT KOSYGIN'S OUTBURST HAD BEEN INTENDED TO SINGLE NORWAY OUT AS THE "BAD BOY" OF THE SCANDINAVIANS. HE HAD LABELED NORWAY AS THE ONLY MILITARISTIC MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY. FRYDENLUND SAID THAT IT WAS A CLEAR ATTEMPT TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN NORWAY AND ITS SCANDINAVIAN PARTNERS. FRYDENLUND SAID THAT IF THIS WAS THE SOVIET OBJECTIVE, IT HAD BEEN TOTALLY UNSUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THE OTHER SCANDINAVIANS HAD CLOSED RANKS AND SUPPORTED NORWAY.

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6. FRYDENLUND WENT ON TO STATE THAT, AT THE MEETING THE NEXT DAY WITH THE SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN, KOSYGIN AGAIN REPEATED BASICALLY THE SAME CATALOGUE OF DISPLEASURE WITH THE NORWEGIANS.

7. ALTHOUGH THE KOSYGIN REMARKS CONTAINED NOTHING NEW, DESPITE THE UNUSUAL MANNER IN WHICH THEY WERE DELIVERED, THE FOREIGN MINISTER BELIEVES THAT IT WAS A DELIBERATE AND PLANNED EFFORT TO PUT NORWAY ON NOTICE, PARTICULARLY REGARDING ITS NATO STANCE.

8. ONE RESULT OF THE KOSYGIN EFFORT HAS, ACCORDING TO FRYDENLUND, BEEN TO MAKE PRIME MINISTER NORDLI FEEL ANGRY AND INSULTED BY THE SOVIET UNION. THE MINISTER ALSO NOTED THAT THE NORWEGIANS REGRETTED THE EMBARRASMENT THAT THE FINNS SUFFERED BY HAVING AN EVENT OF THIS TYPE TAKE PLACE AT A MEETING UNDER THEIR SPONSORSHIP.

9. COMMENT: IT SEEMS CLEAR IN RETROSPECT THAT THE KOSYGIN ATTACK ON NORWAY IN HELSINKI WAS A PLANNED EVENT, QUITE POSSIBLY PART OF AN EFFORT TO SET THE STAGE FOR THE SCHEDULED VISIT TWO WEEKS LATER OF DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ZIMSKOV. THE OVERLY

AGGRESSIVE MANNER IN WHICH THE MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED MAY WELL HAVE REFLECTED THE CONCERNS OF THE MOMENT. IN ANY EVENT AS FAR AS THE NORWEGIANS ARE CONCERNED THE SOVIETS CLEARLY OVERPLAYED THEIR HAND. THE STAGE MANAGING MAY HAVE GOTTEN SOMEWHAT OUT OF HAND, BUT JUST AS CLEARLY THE SOVIETS HAD A MESSAGE THEY WANTED TO DELIVER TO THE NORWEGIANS AND THEIR NORDIC NEIGHBORS.

10. IT IS OF COURSE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE PRECISELY WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE MOTIVE OR MOTIVES FOR THE SOVIET OUTBURST. POSSIBLY THE SOVIETS VIEW NORWAY, WITH ITS INCREASING ECONOMIC STRENGTH, ITS GROWING ROLE AS AN ENERGY SUPPLIER, AND ITS MORE FORCEFUL NATO STANCE, AS THE MOST DYNAMIC ACTOR ON THE SCANDINAVIAN SCENE. IN THIS EVENT, THE KOSYGIN DISCUSSION WOULD HAVE AS ONE OBJECTIVE
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PUTTING THE NORWEGIANS ON NOTICE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS WITH THE DIRECTION OF NORWEGIAN SECURITY POLICY AND ARE WATCHING IT CLOSELY. WE NOTE THAT, AS THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID, KOSYGIN BROUGHT UP NO NEW SUBJECTS IN HIS DISCUSSION. OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS, THE SAME LIST OF ISSUES -- GERMAN TROOP PARTICIPATION, PRESTOCKAGE AND THE NORWEGIAN PRESS -- HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY BROUGHT UP BY THE RUSSIANS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC. THOUGH THE SOVIETS HAVE PROBABLY RESIGNED THEMSELVES TO THE FACT THAT NORWAY IS NOT TO LEAVE NATO, THEY MAY HOPE BY MEANS OF THESE RATHER BLUNT TACTICS TO PRESSURE THE NORWEGIANS INTO A MORE CONTRAINED ROLE IN NATO, PERHAPS BY FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON THE ACTIVITIES WITHIN NORWAY OF OTHER ALLIANCE MEMBERS.

11. ANOTHER POSSIBLE MOTIVE FOR THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST WOULD BE TO INFLUENCE THE FORTHCOMING PUBLIC AND STORTING DEBATE ON NORWAY'S LONG RANGE SECURITY POLICY. BY SHOWING THAT NORWAY'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO CAN INCREASE TENSIONS WITH HER SUPERPOWER NEIGHBOR, THE SOVIETS MIGHT HOPE TO STRENGTHEN THE HAND IN THAT DEBATE OF THE SMALL, BUT VOCAL, GROUP OF NORWEGIANS WHO QUESTION THE VALUE OF NORWAY'S NATO LINKS.

12. FINALLY, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE KOSYGIN SESSION WAS NOT UNRELATED TO THE DIFFICULT BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE SOVIET UNION (ON FISHERIES, BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY, AND SVALBARD FISHERIES PROTECTION ZONE). AS HAS OFTEN BEEN THE CASE WHEN THE SOVIETS EMPLOY THE CARROT-STICK APPROACH WITH THE NORWEGIANS, THE SOVIETS BLUNT TACTICS SEEMS TO WORK TO THE SOVIETS' DISADVANTAGE.
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